

The English Magazine

Auspicium melioris ævi

Issue the second

In Which the Editress Introduces Herself

THE FIRST issue of *The English Magazine* has been, I think one may say, an unqualified success. *Romantic* readers and others have greeted her with enthusiasm as the first general magazine of her type for—well, for far too long.

In that issue *The English Magazine* introduced herself. In this issue her editress (or editrix as Pippit prefers it) has been prevailed upon to perform the same task.

Your editress, then, goes by the name of Miss Prism. She has at some time been a superior sort of governess, “finishing” young ladies who had passed the usual age of schooling but who lacked, as modern girls do, the refinements of ways and manners, of delicacy and of understanding which belong to a lady who has been raised in civilised times. This was by no means a form of paid employment, for Miss Prism is herself a lady of independent means; rather it was a labour of love, performed by one who believed—and who continues to believe—that the future of the civilised world must depend upon education and, more specifically, upon the education of an élite who will be the torch-bearers of what is right and true and pure and noble in a world which is passing through a period of darkness. Miss Prism, being a governess of the old school, believes that every aspect of human life is of importance;—that decorum has its place beside philosophy in the making of a whole human being, and good grammar beside moral rectitude;—and she promises that all these things will take their due place in *The English Magazine*.

She is a lady who has an unswerving conviction of the distinction between *right* and *wrong* and, as such, has been chosen as one well suited to perform the function of national censor of manners and morals, as did Isaac Bickerstaff of *The Tatler* in the early 18th century. Contributors and even subscribers have already been occasionally taken aback by the readiness of her red ink in the correction of anything which may be amiss in their style, construction or manner of expression;—but this has been her *metier* and her long habit, and she cannot change it now

even if she would.

Nonetheless, for all her correctitude and occasional necessary severity, her soul is not without its vein of humour, nor its strain of romance.

THE correspondence received by the magazine has been very pleasing. Much of it is dedicated to praise and welcome and we thank all who have hailed her so warmly. We have not printed very much of this sort of correspondence because it might have seemed just a *touch* boastful.

We have decided not to have such a thing as a “letters page”. Such an institution seems to us to represent the distinction between the “professional” editorial staff and contributors on the one hand and the “amateur” letter-writers on the other. In *The English Magazine*, we are all amateurs;—all work for love rather than for money, and we adhere to the ethos of amateurism in its old gentlemanly sense in contrast to the unpleasant modern cult of “professionalism”. The distinction between a correspondent in the amateur sense and a correspondent in the professional sense does not exist for us and we do not propose to arrange this magazine in imitation of those for which it does.

The lack of distinction between a letter and an “article” is illustrated by M. Lenoir’s piece in this issue:—this was sent to us as a letter, but because of its length and consistency of subject, we have presented the main part of the letter as a feature in its own right. Many letters will be printed as letters, of course, but the erosion of the difference between correspondence and editorial is an important aspect of the “club” atmosphere of *The English Magazine*. We are open to ruminations and speculations of every type and are happy to print snippets of a line or two. We encourage each subscriber to contribute to the conversation just as he would at his own club. Of course, we still want properly constructed essays, but a good letter upon a serious subject should always be well constructed in any case.

As this is a small magazine, there is a good

chance of any letter that is amusing, original and well written appearing in print and we hope that the speculations published herein will stimulate discussion. We are interested in every point of view, but would say that those contributions which have the least chance of appearing (apart from badly-written ones) are those that evince the stock liberal-modernist-egalitarian-immoralist point of view. This point of view has four national television stations (or are there more now?), four national wireless stations, a dozen or so national newspapers, a State education system and innumerable other agencies devoted to propagating it night and day:—we do not feel that it requires the extra support of a column or two in *The English Magazine*. Our readers hear a very adequate representation of this point of view,—or if, as is often the case, they do not, it is be-

Wireless

The New Home Service A Conversation with Miss Lindy Lynne

BEFORE Miss Langridge made her a character in Mimsy Crystal, Miss Lindy Lynne was one of the regular characters broadcasting on the Imperial (or New) Home Service. Now that the Service has been re-launched, Miss Lynne (whether played by the same girl or not, we are not at liberty to say) has not only returned to the Magnetic Waves but has become deputy directrix of the Home Service. Who better, then, to talk to The English Magazine about the Service, past, present and future?

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Miss Lynne, would you be so kind as to explain to our readers exactly what the Imperial Home Service is?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: Certainly. We think of The Imperial Home Service as a wireless service and we produce it just as if it were a wireless service. In fact it is not broadcast "on the air" at all. It exists in the form of those queer little tape-cassettes you can get. Each cassette lasts 1½ hours and contains several programmes. It is not exactly like the old Home Service—more a cross between that and the old Light Programme. Its intention is to provide a complete service for the home within the obvious limitations of not actually broadcasting. We have a lot of music, stories, plays, occasional talks, *Children's Wireless* and so forth. It is even a bit like the

cause they have chosen deliberately to exclude its "media" from their lives and do not want it to be suddenly thrust at them from the only "medium" they can call their own.

A Statement attributed to Miss Genevieve Falconer sums up the position neatly. It appears that she was expounding some delightfully reactionary notion to a friend in a London restaurant, the pliancy of which was such as to make what my informant termed "a brash and rather drunken brain-washee" at an adjoining table feel entitled to intervene with a little homily on the subject of Human Equality; to which Miss Falconer quietly replied:—"If I wished to hear what you have just said, I would buy a television machine: it would propound the same views just as constantly, with more eloquence and would have a volume control dial."

Third Programme with some quite serious talks from time to time, but we do not have much classical music—just the odd lightish thing, because that is the one area where a reasonable and relatively inoffensive service is still available. I know the neo-Third Programme does go in for a lot of modernist squawking-and-tittering these days, but it is still mostly a good service. Besides I think modern "serious" music can serve a useful purpose. It so exactly expresses the modern intellect. If ever, in a moment of weakness, one is induced by sheer weight of numbers to wonder whether modern people are really mad, or whether perhaps it is oneself, one has only to listen-in to modern "serious" music for five minutes—well, perhaps two—and one's doubts vanish like the summer dew. But I digress, do I not?

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Charmingly. So the Imperial Home Service is a wireless service for Romantics?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: For Romantics, yes. It has all the things Romantics like about traditional wireless and none of the things they hate about modern wireless. Some of the things we do are quite "inny" as they say:—references to people, jokes and crazes of a particular set; but I think some one would soon come to feel "in" just by taking the Service over a period. They can easily write to us, make requests; become a part of the thing. Being so small almost every letter is referred to if it is at all interesting and every request is played—provided we have the record! Now that the Service is "going public" we hope that any one who enjoys charming, reactionary wireless or is tired of the declining

Standards of modern broadcast entertainment will join The New Home Service.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: The New Home Service is not really new, is it?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: Well, newish. Lots newer than the old Home Service;—but not as new as some people might think. It has been publicly launched quite recently, but it does have a history. It began in the days when Society was much tighter knit than it is today and every one knew every one else. Tapes were then passed from hand to hand without charge. We only made one or two copies of each tape and then they were copied and passed along through a sort of web of friends. A new tape would multiply and spread like magic. It was an excellent system.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Would you mind people doing that now?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: No, not at all. We make a nominal charge to cover our costs, but we do not do the thing for money. All our members—and any one else—may copy, lend and give the tapes quite freely. In fact, we are pleased if you do. Too many things are "professional" these days. Everything jolly seems to be done for money; well, we are not professional.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Is there a licence fee?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: We do suggest that people who listen regularly to the Home Service without being members pay an annual fee of £5. This just helps us to keep the Service running; but it is quite voluntary. If you find it hard to afford, we do not even want you to pay. We want you to enjoy the Service. Some people very kindly pay more.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Could you tell us more about the early days of the Service?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: It began as a game. It is still very much a game, really. One of the girls in Oxford inherited a huge old reel-to-reel tape-recorder. It was really quite a good one and had a lot of tapes of music from the '30s. I and two other girls were sharing the house and up till then we had only used a wind-up gramophone. We felt very ambivalent towards this machine;—we were captivated by the treasure-house of new music; our friends flocked round to hear it; but at the same time we rather wondered whether letting this electric monster into the house was not something of a forward step. I rather think we had decided to keep it for a year, hear all the music exhaustively and then give it to the poor, or swap it for a donkey-cart or

something. In the meantime, however, fate intervened.

We had two guests staying with us for a week, and we often did play-readings and things for entertainment. We had a very professional-looking microphone with this machine, so some one suggested that we do a "wireless play", which we did, using the gramophone for incidental music. We all adopted slightly stilted "wireless voices"—as you know, that slightly stilted style is very fashionable among Romantics even in real life; it was then, even before the wireless had begun. It went off very well and our guests insisted upon making copies of it on a portable tape-recorder which they actually bought for the purpose. The play was shorter than the cassette tape, so we popped some gramophone records on the end, with some very reactionary-wireless introductions. And that, we thought was that.

But it was not that. That tape spread like the proverbial. Before long, half the people we knew had copies of it. And that was how the Home Service began. Of course, after that we had to do more programmes.

People who had spurned electric voice-machines were suddenly buying those dreadful little cassette machines. Sometimes we felt a bit guilty about it. There was a craze for plumbing them into old wireless cases, which improved the sitch somewhat. It was very jolly, though. It made the Empire so much more real to have its own wireless service. Every one talked about the programmes. They became part of our world.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Did you find the fact that you were not really broadcasting took away from the actuality of the thing?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: No. It would have been nice, of course, to "listen-in" to a new programme of broadcasting every evening, but then we had not enough broadcasters to provide such a service in any case. We used the term wireless, but the Home Service is not quite wireless—it is what it is. A special "medium" of its own, and one ideally suited to the Romantic Empire as it is at present. Some people listen to the same programmes dozens of times; they become part of their lives. People play the music programmes at parties, just as people used to turn on the wireless at a party in the days when the B.B.C. played popular dance music. Children enjoy hearing the same songs and stories again. The Home Service is midway between a wireless programme and a publication.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Can you tell us

something about how programmes were made then and how they are made now.

MISS LINDY LYNNE: There is really very little difference. Things have hardly changed at all. Every one involved has always been very un-technical. The only way we knew of putting music onto tape was to wind up the gramophone, put on the needle and hold the microphone near it! And that is what we do to this day. As you know, there is no volume control on a wind-up, so if we need to "fade" a record down, we just move the microphone further away. If one has to speak over music, in a play, or dramatic announcement, for example, one turns one's back on the gramophone, so that one's body shields the microphone from the music.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Of course, you do not speak over records while you are announcing them.

MISS LINDY LYNNE: Good gracious, no! That would be positively democratic! We do everything very formally. There is normally a tiny (we hope it is tiny) space between the announcement and the music, while we put the needle on. Nothing is done slickly or too-cleverly. Smooth, slippery professionalism is the very antithesis of the tone of the Home Service.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: So one might say that the effect is one of amateurism; and yet some of the Home Service announcers (one must never say "presenters", must one?) are very experienced and very good, are they not?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: Oh yes, very good indeed. It is the art that conceals art, what?

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: What would you say gives the Home Service its reactionary flavour?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: Well, of course, it is no one thing. All sorts of little things help it. One important thing is that none of our announcers patronises the modern broadcast services, so they are not tempted to pick up the little tricks that differentiate modern broadcasting from real broadcasting. Another vital thing is that everything is scripted. None of our record announcers is ever talking impromptu, however much she may seem to be. She writes her own script in advance.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Really? I should have thought that hardly necessary. I know that your announcers include some of the best extempore speakers in the country.

MISS LINDY LYNNE: They do; nevertheless a script is vital to the tone of the thing. All B.B.C. announcers used scripts up until the mid '60s and all modern "disc riders", or what-

ever they call them, speak extempore. The formal, affected, slightly stilted tone of the ideal Home Service announcer, is, as you know, used by many Romantics just as much in real life as "on the air", but nevertheless, a prepared script adds a subtle but very definite touch to one's whole address.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: The Home Service produced some very fascinating characters, did it not?—Lindy Lynne yourself, Mademoiselle Lala, Miss Fotheringay and so forth.

MISS LINDY LYNNE: Oh, yes. The wireless is a wonderful place for developing characters. I use this character (Lindy Lynne, I mean) much of the time nowadays, but she was born on the Home Service. Mademoiselle Lala was (perhaps I may be able to say "is"—I hope so) almost purely a stage persona. She was always played by the same person—I will not say whom. Every one remembers her, she was so jolly: very loud without quite being vulgar. No one can ever forget her piercing "Bon-jooour, mes petits!" I suppose she was the only character we had who was a comic character rather than a half-real whimsy. She popped up at unexpected moments and was gone before any one could catch her! The children loved her; that was a good excuse for lots of things.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: Did you actually have much of a juvenile audience?

MISS LINDY LYNNE: You mean:—was *Children's Wireless* just an excuse for grown-ups to enjoy charming little fairy stories and "Teddy Bears' Picnic"? Well, to tell the truth, it was; but we did find that we had a young audience as well. Some of them were child-personae of some of the chaps and chapettes, of course, but quite a few were real children (well, the others were real, too, but you know what I mean). There is so little that a decent parent can find for children by way of entertainment these days, except books; and lots of children actually prefer innocent, jolly things. I rather think they all do, if you can get behind their poor little hardened masks of premature grown-upper; but quite a lot know they do straight away. They did not just listen to *Children's Wireless*, they loved all of it. It was one of the most pleasing things about the whole business. If I wanted to get all pi and say what a fundamentally worthwhile thing the Home Service was and is and how it deserves your support, I would start talking about the need for decent, innocent entertainment for children;—but I don't, so I won't.

THE ENGLISH MAGAZINE: [to the reader:] This conversation is rather long, so we will have

to print the second half in our next issue. Join us then to read about a notorious "on-the-air" practical joke; the real nature of the Home Service's enigmatic music policy; the famous 21st-century News "Broadcasts"; some comments on modern wireless; Home Service plans for the future and several other interesting matters.

Social Criticism

A Modest Proposal by M. Claude Lenoir

IT IS beyond dispute, I imagine, that coarse, loutish behaviour, disrespect for authority and public bad manners are one of the distinctive features of national life in the declining years of the 20th century. Government ministers are, from time to time, exercised in vain over ways of curbing the hooliganism and violence which are, as it were, the most advanced forms of these phenomena.

Some time ago, Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne, editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, offered a masterly analysis of the situation showing how good manners are the result of social inequality:—the best classes of society adopting a high standard of "courtly" behaviour, including clothes, hygiene, language, diction, the treatment of women, swearing and codes of honour and chivalry. Other classes of society strive to imitate the ways of their betters. "Good manners and decorous behaviour", he says, "have always been very much the products of an unequal, hierarchical society." He points out that even quite recently some one with the right accent could quell unruly conduct with a glance.

Mr. Worsthorne describes how in recent times Socialistic ideas that good manners and good behaviour are "elitist" (which, of course, they are) and that they are a means of social control exercised by the few over the many (which, again, they are) and that these are Bad Things (which they are not) have led to a quasi-official adoption of coarseness, vulgarity, bad accents and so forth by much of what used to be called "the Establishment", led by the B.B.C. In what Mr. Worsthorne calls, with an outspokenness worthy of Sparrowhawk, "that evil decade, the 1960s" good manners were no longer "officially" valued. It is the legacy of that period—and its continuation—that has led to the current breaking down of civilised behaviour.

None of this, I imagine, is really new to readers of this journal. It is, perhaps, interesting to speculate how the situation might be changed. Mr. Worsthorne saw in the decline of confiscatory taxation a hope that the ruling class might again emerge as a true élite which would inspire a movement back toward civilised values. Perhaps, though the new-style *parvenu* seems to us the very last person able or willing to re-establish courtly behaviour. The money-grubber of the past at least wanted to join the ranks of gentlemen. Today's money-grubber, brought up on pop-culture, scarcely knows what a gentleman is and has no wish to be one.

Supposing, however, that a more traditional order of society were to prevail in, say, the next half-century—an eventuality which, for various reasons, we do not consider wholly improbable—it is intriguing to speculate how a more civilised order might be imposed upon society.

How, for example, might a position of affairs be restored in which some one with the right accent could quell unruly behaviour with a glance? Mr. Worsthorne is not unrealistic about how the situation first arose:—"Originally this was a matter of naked power. Prince and nobles could impose good behaviour by force. The iron fist was very visible in the velvet glove. But over the centuries the velvet glove alone became quite enough to get the right response. No need for the truncheon."

Indeed;—and while Mr. Worsthorne hopes for a semi-automatic restoration of the proper order by something akin to "market forces", it is probably more realistic to recognise that the iron fist may have to be re-imposed, at any rate for a short time, to re-establish discipline over the most unruly elements. This is not something we would welcome, but it will possibly be necessary. The civilising process goes deep, however, and we feel that the iron fist will not have to be applied either hard or long in order to achieve the required effect—though, of course, the longer the problem is allowed to develop the more drastic the remedy will have to be.

I think all of us will be agreed that we do not want what is called a "police State". Many of us feel that State and police control over the individual is already too great. An iron glove of that sort would be no remedy, and, indeed, we would say that this sort of response to public disorder is a product of egalitarian thinking. It comes from the notion that we cannot distinguish between different

members of society, and that if controls must be imposed upon the most unruly elements, they must be equally imposed upon all.

A perfect example of this was supplied by a court case some time ago in which a respectable, middle-aged charity collector was fined for defending himself against serious assault at the hands of a group of vicious young thugs with a swordstick. The swordstick was classified as an "offensive weapon" and the judge said something to the effect that if young men from "deprived backgrounds" were punished for carrying weapons, how much worse was it for a man with every middle-class advantage to commit a similar offence. The modish thinking being, apparently, that a "deprived background" excuses offences while a relatively "privileged" one makes them more reprehensible.

The absurdity of this reasoning is apparent to any one not entirely brainwashed by Socialistic nonsense. It is wickedly irresponsible to pretend that one cannot distinguish between young thugs from the slums carrying flick-knives and a respectable charity-collector carrying a swordstick for self-defence. Some time ago the State of Florida, in response to a massive increase in crimes of violence, passed a law which made it possible for virtually any citizen to carry a gun for self-protection. If the situation in this country continues to worsen, a similar law may some day be necessary here. We would suggest that there should be certain restrictions to this law. Apart from the disqualification of those with a criminal record, there should be an age qualification, a property qualification and a class qualification. This would prevent the law, as far as possible, from arming young ruffians, professional criminals and the rougher elements of society generally. Of course, such restrictions could never be wholly fair. Many perfectly responsible people would be disarmed, but it would help to re-institute a certain differential between types of people. When some one with the right accent tried to quell unruly behaviour he would undoubtedly be listened to:—his hearers reasoning that since he dresses and speaks well, he—or, indeed, she—may well be carrying a gun.

As the situation returned to normal, the law could be revoked. The iron fist would no longer be necessary. The velvet glove would again be sufficient.

The Politics of Manners and the uses of inequality by Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne is published by the Centre for Policy Studies at £3-18s.

Correspondence

Gramophone Notes

MADAM,

"Mysteries of the 78th Revolution" was a splendid essay. Just the sort of thing of which we need more (note how hard I am working, Miss Prism, to avoid ending my sentences with prepositions).

To the question of why real gramophones are so much more satisfactory than any other means of playing jinky music, I would say that it is not just the fact of having to wind for each record. No, it is something far subtler. There is a quality of sound and feel which is entirely different on a wind-up. Let the worldly and the materialistic scoff. We who have heard the light, so to speak, know.

On the question of re-using needles, did you know that giving a needle a half-turn presents a fresh face to the record and gives it a new lease of life. Some of my more parsimonious chums say that four quarter-turns are possible. Three turns have certainly been achieved by,

YOUR HUMBLE SERV.

MISS P.-P. TURNER.

Thank you, Miss Turner. I am pleased to see that your grammar is improving, but you should not draw attention to it. Quiet, understated correctness is what will please me most.

MADAM,

On the subject of steel needles ruining records there are more opinions than one. The most sanguine I have heard was from Mr. Hubert Gregg, who, replying to our own Miss Lucinda Tyrrell on his weekly wireless spot pooh-poohed the entire idea. He has played his collection with such needles for years and says that it is all in mint condition. He says that he rescued some records from a garden shed covered in white fungus (the records, not the shed—though the shed may have been too, he did not say) and played them with steel needles which scraped them clean as a whistle and they have been mint ever since.

YOURS &c.

"LUCY LOCKETT"

Either Mr. Gregg's definition of mint is rather different from a dealer's or he uses a very disreputable dealer. As I feared, Pippit's article is attracting some rather silly correspondence. I may have to ban her from these pages. This is not The Romantic, you know.

MADAM,

Thank you for sending the first issue of *The English Magazine* to me; it was a very good read. I do indeed wish to lend my support, therefore I enclose a cheque for this year's subscription which includes an extra contribution.

Pippit's piece on gramophones and 78 r.p.m. records was most interesting, and, if I may, I should like to add to it. I have recently acquired a mahogany table-top gramophone, and I have also purchased many real records. However I have been appalled at how quickly steel needles destroy the latter; even when used only once. I have tried wooden "thorn" needles, but the arm of the gramophone is too heavy and the needle wears out half-way through the music.

Since then, I have been reliably informed that wooden needles, surprisingly, do almost as much damage as steel ones. I must say that they are effective in cleaning dirt from the grooves and giving tired-looking records a good shine, but they should not be used often.

The bee's knees of gramophone needles, apparently are sapphire-tipped or even diamond-tipped. These can be used seventy-five times and cause relatively little wear, so I am told, provided that they are not removed before it is time to replace them.

A very helpful fellow by the name of Hodgeson, of "Expert Pickups" is at present making a couple of sapphires for me. For those interested, his address is:

Mr. D.W.Hodgeson, Expert Pickups, P.O. Box No. 3, Ashstead, Surrey.

I await the next issue with interest,

YOURS &c.

MR. S. KIRBY.

An excellent letter. Sensible and helpful. We must encourage more young gentlemen to write. How intriguing that the sapphire needles will only refrain from harming the records "if they are not removed before it is time to replace them". It seems like some mystical prohibition in a fairy-tale, does it not? But then precious stones are rather magic, I always think;—and perhaps Miss Turner is right in suggesting that there is more to the matter of gramophones than is wot of in worldly philosophy. And what of turning? Can disciples of the Turner school of Domestic Economy increase their sapphire yields to 150 or even 300 jinks? Or is it precisely the turning which causes the problem—does the turned sapphire present an unevenly-worn face to the record and thus harm it;—and is that the reason for the mysterious prohibition? How pro-

saic if it is. Ah, me!

Pippit, by the bye, adds that she has "never had your difficulty with wooden needles—perhaps it is the unusual weight of your gramophone arm which causes you to find steel needles so very destructive and to wear the thorn ones so quickly." Pippit also says that "same records seem much more vulnerable than others to needle-damage. Some mint records are never the same after the first playing, while others are as tough as the proverbial old boots, and play very creditably even when they look as if Fred Astaire had done his famous Top Hat sand-shuffle dance on their surfaces."

A final thought before we leave this fascinating subject for the nonce:—if winding for each play is so much a part of the ritual of the record, can we happily do without the business of needle-changing when we have installed our glittering Arabian-Nights jewelled needles? As a governess with—ahem—some slight experience of these matters, I would say "yes". But what of the rest of you? Are there any needle-changing purists? Would Miss Masters, for example, repine if she could no longer strew the drawing room with spent needles? Would she welcome the change? Or simply accept it in the cause of keeping her parlour-maids for longer?

STOP PRESS: Pippit has discovered that: "Mr. Hodgeson no longer makes diamond- or sapphire-tipped needles for mechanical gramophones. It appears that the heavy heads cause them to do more damage than steel ones, which do not do much damage if one has a normal-weight head anyway. So that makes about half of this column pretty pointless, doesn't it?"

No, it does not. We have been having a very pleasant time discussing these matters, but the pleasures of conversation are perhaps rather a grown-up idea for Pippit. The address is still useful for those of you who play 78s on electric machines.

FINAL NOTE: Readers of early editions of *The English Magazine* no. 1 were advised of the availability of Gramophone needles from The Vintage Gramophone Company. Several readers have reported that they have been unable to obtain a reply from this company; their cheques have been uncashed and their orders unfulfilled. Others have fared better, but the service seems uncertain to say the least. Better service is rendered by Phonoservice, who sell steel needles, loud, soft and medium at (at the time of writing) a mere 10/- per packet of 100, which should save readers from the need to over-use them. The address is:

Phonoservice, 157 Childwall Valley Road, Liverpool, Lancashire.

Words

Germanic Brutes
and Latin Poisoners

by Miss Caroline Scott-Robinson

I FULLY sympathise with Sparrowhawk's recent remarks [*English Magazine* no. 1] on the term *Poll Tax* ("a stout Anglo-Saxon term redolent of mediæval Englishness") as opposed to *Community Charge* ("a pimminy Latinate construction which reeks of red tape, bureaucratic euphemism and the repulsive, ersatz 'community consciousness' of the modern planner"). There is, however, an opposite tendency in modernised English which is perhaps even more unpleasant—a movement to de-Latinise or Anglo-Saxonise the language.

Almost all the beastly 'Spelling Reforms', for example, both those which have taken root in America and those which are creeping into usage in English, seem primarily concerned with eradicating traces of the Latin and French roots of our language. In America, words ending in "our" and "re", like "labour" and "centre" are "simplified" to "labor" and "center". Mediæval (or mediæval) becomes "medieval", which I can never help mentally pronouncing "meddy-evval". These habits have apparently spread to Australia where it seems to be the fashion to assert national independence from Britain by slavishly copying everything American. I am sure readers will agree that these Esperanto-ish changes rob the words concerned of a great deal of their charm, delicacy and sense of antiquity. Their adoption in America, by the bye, is not a natural development (as, say, the American accent is), but the result of the fact that spelling reform cranks, who never quite managed to get a foothold in England, despite the patronage of arch-crank George Bernard Shaw, were able to impose their will on the newer nation due to certain historical accidents (chiefly the fact that the compiler of the first great American dictionary, Noah Webster, was a spelling reform crank). These spelling reform cranks tended also to be vegetarians, teetotallers, prohibitionists, abolitionists and supporters of any number of other dotty causes.

We would digress here to say that the simplified "American" spellings have nothing particularly American about them and should

not be regarded as obligatory for Americans. As late as 1938 linguistic writers spoke only of "an increasing tendency" for these forms to be used in America. H.P. Lovecraft, one of the most civilised of popular 20th century American writers refused to use them, although his American publishers often "corrected" his work. We would strongly advise our American readers to use the more traditional forms. To the objection that this would mean going against what is now the accepted practice of the entire nation, we would reply that every modern country presents its own problems to Romantics. In England, for example, we have, among other things, a monetary system which we cannot use without translating it back into a civilised form, which is at least as bothersome as the American spelling problem. Most Romantics see the amusing side of these vulgar changes and are not, perhaps, entirely sorry to be presented with these necessities for differentiating themselves from the natives. The very fact that one has to think about using them brings out their charm which might, from too common a usage, go unnoticed. And, it is to be hoped, makes one more sensitive to the beauties and subtleties of those aspects of our language and traditions which are still in common use. It would be sad, of course, if any one expected the changes to last, but does any one?

But I must resume my theme. In the 19th century there was a movement for the Anglo-Saxonisation of the English language. The more extreme of its adherents tried to replace all Latinate words in the language with "Anglo-Saxon" equivalents. They would call biology "lifelore", for example. Recently we have been subjected to a full-scale invasion of these grotesque pseudo-Teutonic compounds: "ongoing", "lifestyle", "tailback", "feedback", "update" "downgrade" *ad nauseam*. These originate (of course) in America and are gleefully seized upon by hacks of the British press and electrical "media" who have much the same sensitivity to words as a precocious schoolboy who has never read a book in his life but wishes to impress his friends, or a polytechnic lecturer. Americans seem to coin and copy these words with the utter lack of embarrassment of people who not only do not know any better but have never met any one who does.

I once met a modernist Roman Catholic priest who, taking me for a non-Catholic modernist, suggested that we engage in "dialogue" which might lead to "mutual upbuild-

ing". (A modernist Catholic, as you probably know, is some one who loves modernist non-Catholics and hates non-modernist Catholics). The word "upbuilding" interested me; it is, presumably, an Anglo-Saxonification of the English word "edification". It is just the sort of absurd coinage the 19th-century Anglo-Saxonisers would have used. I wonder if my modernist priest realised that those Anglo-Saxonisers were closely related to the entire 19th-century school of Germanic linguistic nationalism, whose most enduring product—derived from the philological discovery of the common basis of the Indo-European languages—was the concept of the Aryan race.

No doubt our clerical friend would be horrified at such a connexion with what he would probably term "racism" (another American simplification—it appears in no English dictionary before the mid-1960s—the word, if one must use it, is "racialism").

It is not my intention to argue with Sparrowhawk—I am not nearly so rash!—who, I know, in any case, is no Anglo-Saxonist. Nor do I fear that our language is being taken over by Teutonisers. On the contrary, there is quite as much Græco-Latin nonsense entering the language as there is Hunnish nonsense. Words like "dialogue", for example, used by our priest, when all he meant was good old Anglo-Saxon "talk". Not to mention all the pseudo-scientific rot like "syndrome", "trauma", "paranoia" etc.

Our charming English language has two sides to her character, one Teutonic, the other Latinate. The Germanic side has the virtues of strength, simplicity and directness. It also has vices. It can at times be unsubtle and even downright crude. The Latinate side adds elegance and intelligence to the language (the Germanic languages are not unintelligent, but theirs is an older, more primordial intelligence which has not been understood in the West since before the Dark Ages—all Western intellectual activity since the Roman Empire has required the support of Latin). Its vices are those of becoming obscure and overblown and allowing clever-sounding words to substitute for thought.

It is in the nature of the modern world that we should be deluged with new coinages from both sides of the language and that they should have the vices of each with the virtues of neither.

I am not on principle a linguistic conservative but in an age like ours, as in the Dark Ages, conserving what we have is the only

course open to us and the finest duty we can perform. If the language emerges unscathed from the vulgarisation of the present period: if it does not degenerate on the one hand into a series of emotional squeaks and grunts or on the other into a series of windy high-sounding slogans whose meaning no one can remember, then we who have cared about her, and cared for her, in these dark days shall have performed an office comparable with that of those monasteries which preserved learning in the days when Europe was given over to the barbarian hordes.

Native Affairs

Tales from Babylon
by Sparrowhawk

RECENTLY—well, not all that recently—I was sent a rather unusual cutting. It consisted of an entire newspaper. My correspondent was of the opinion that, seeing only the cuttings sent in by my other correspondents, I might be getting a rather one-sided view of the modern world, seeing only the odder and sillier aspects of it which strike the newspaper-clipper. He suggested that I should read the entire paper and form a more rounded view.

Now I do not accept the view that my view is so very unrounded. I ask my correspondents for cuttings which illustrate the typical rather than the extreme; and while, in the nature of things I do still get a certain number representing the dottier excesses of modernity, I do not think I give them undue weight. Despite the fact that I do not read newspapers or imbibe the electronic mass-media—indeed, I would argue, partly because of that fact—I believe I have a fairly clear idea of what the modern world is like. Admittedly it is an outsider's view, but then is not that often the clearest?

I will confess that the task of reading this paper did not appeal to me. Even reading a number of cuttings in succession gives me the feeling of having taken a mild poison or eaten a very bad dinner. One must read Jane Austen or listen to Mozart for a good hour in order to cleanse one's soul of the taint. After a time—a very long time it must be owned—I turned to this yellowing bundle of coarse paper and submitted myself, as my correspondent had expressed it, to the experiment.

The paper in question was what is called a "quality Sunday" (I should explain to my read-

ers that the word 'quality', when employed as an adjective, is taken by Americans and sub-Americans to mean "of good quality". It did not surprise me in any way. The modern world, as reflected in its pages, was very much what I have always known the modern world to be. It seemed no more sane in a large slice than in small ones; only more oppressive.

One way in which the exercise did prove useful was in the number of instances of bowdlerism which it revealed. If I had been sent cuttings on the subject it would be reasonable to assume that my correspondents had selected them especially, but here they were all together in one particular newspaper, which I suppose may be taken to be as good a random cross-section of the doings of the natives as any other.

It has long been fashionable to chortle at Bowdler's attempts in the last century to edit out all the bits of Shakespeare that might be offensive to middle-class Victorian ladies. One can imagine how heartily the next century will guffaw at the similar practice which is, it appears, common today. Bowdler was a single individual, regarded as something of a prude and an eccentric even by his own contemporaries. The modern bowdlerisers are much more numerous, and their prudish tinkering well established as standard practice. Even literature written a few short decades ago is not exempt from being bowdlerised into conformity with the new Puritanism.

For example, turning to my newspaper I find that in a recent revival of Noël Coward's *Bitter Sweet*, the song "That Wonderful Melody" has had the phrase "sung by a coon" replaced by the meaningless and dissonant "sung by a loon". Turning to the Entertainment Guide, I see that Agatha Christie's celebrated *Ten Little Niggers* was running under the bowdlerised title *And Then There Were None*. Opposition to smoking, it seems also brings out the Bowdler in the modern iron-sides. A picture of the novelist Miss Daisy Waugh, issued by her publishers, Heinemann, shows her fingers in the position of holding a cigarette, but the offending cigarette has been touched out. The publishers suggested that Miss Waugh herself wanted the change, but she says she did not.

The Soviet-style retouching may be amusing in this instance, but it is more disquieting when the same approach is brought to the study of history itself. Modern examination courses which at the time of this newspaper were to be enforced on most schoolchildren

in England (they probably have been by now) disallow any recognition of "race-ist" or "sex-ist" attitudes on the part of historical figures. As Professor Robert Skidelsky, professor of International Studies at Warwick University (apparently there is such a place—and such a subject) says of the courses: "To exclude all the parts of the minds of people in the past which do not conform to present views leads to a form of indoctrination."

Indeed it does. No doubt British educational authorities are already ordering stocks of loose-leaf history books from Russia.

As I have said, all these examples come from a single newspaper sent to me at random. Just an ordinary week in the life of the modern book-burner.

In that same newspaper is an interview with Mr. Vaclav Slavik. In 1968 he was a member of the Politburo and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Today he is a bulldozer driver in a construction gang. He says of his friend Mr. Alexander Dubcek: "He insists that Czechoslovakia is a part of Central Europe, that we are part of an absolutely unique cultural heritage, that our mediocre cultural life must be freed from rule by cliques and gangs of sub-standard intellectuals and artists."

Britain too, though one could be forgiven—especially if one is a regular reader of modern newspapers, "quality" or otherwise—for forgetting it, has an unique and magnificent cultural heritage. Unlike Czechoslovakia she has been free from invasion for a thousand years. She does not lie under the shadow of a foreign oppressor whose purpose is to enforce his boorish ideology upon every area of national life.

Why, then is the cultural life of Britain so mediocre? Why is it dominated by cliques and gangs of sub-standard intellectuals and artists? Could it be because of the power of the strutting Pinkshirts who seem empowered to subject every facet of our history and culture to their pimminy bowdlerisation and to bring everything in the modern world into line with their bloodless and neurotic fads?

I do not think so. I do not think it is a simple question of cause and effect; nor do I credit the Pinkshirts with the power to stifle the cultural life of a nation which was not already in a very feeble state of health.

But I am quite sure that the two phenomena are very closely related and that we shall not be rid of either one unless we are rid of the other.

SHELMERDINE BY MISS PRISCILLA LANGRIDGE CHAPTER II

SHELMERDINE BINGHAM is a young lady of good birth. Two things mark her out from the common: she has an exceptional natural talent as a pickpocket and she has found herself mysteriously transposed from the year 1989 to 2014. As this chapter opens she is about to take her place at Granchester School for Young Ladies, where she has been assigned by the enigmatic Miss Chess to keep watch—why she knows not—on a girl named Cara Leonie. Now read on.

SHELMERDINE AT SCHOOL

As the trap rattled toward the school, one thought preoccupied Shelmerdine's mind. She should, of course, have considered the matter carefully in advance, but one always forgets these things until the last minute. The thought was: what pose should she strike when she arrived? At the best of times this is a difficult question, but when one is in a strange world where one does not know what options are open to one it becomes doubly perplexing. Not that Shelmerdine had, in her own time, adopted any of the standard poses made available to her generation; but she became aware that one needs to know something of the stylistic language of an age even in order to ignore it effectively. Besides, she was not sure where she stood in relation to this age and its gestures.

Thus it was that when she entered the Senior Common Room at Granchester Shelmerdine made quite a good impression. Poised (she was always that) but quiet and with just that touch of uncertainty which befits a new arrival at such a venerable institution. Her normal self-assurance within whatever pose she had chosen would certainly have caused a touch of resentment.

Shelmerdine saw that a certain hesitancy, a hint of awkwardness, was being communicated by her manner and so she let that become a part of her pose, even exaggerating it a little. After all, playing the rôle of the slightly nervous new girl was no less amusing than the parting scene at the station. Why not act out a shyness and a vulnerability which was not, she preferred to think, a part of her nature?

Having given due consideration to her own social appearance, she was now at liberty to notice the three people who were at present in the Common Room. They were all, of course, a little top-heavy, but not as much so as people had seemed at first. The novel effect of the style was being to wear off. That apart, they seemed a singularly serious set of girls. They had their individual differences, of course, but, taken as a group, they seemed like a VI form who were decidedly conscious of their position as a VI form and of the dignity of being at the summit of the school hierarchy. Yes, dignity. That was the word. That was the element which one would not have expected to find among the same group in Shelmerdine's day. In a way that made them seem rather older than the equivalent group would have seemed in the 1980s; but there was also an innocence and a fresh-faced seriousness which made them seem a great deal younger.

It was the older side which asserted itself as a tall dark-haired girl approached Shelmerdine with an air of ceremonious authority which Shelmerdine's own easy self-certainty, so disconcerting to most people in her own time, would have done nothing to dent even if she had been wearing it at that moment. It made her rather glad she wasn't.

"Shelmerdine Bingham," said the girl, "welcome to our Common Room. It is not often that we play host to a mid-term arrival. Allow me to introduce Anne Hallam, our sports captain, Cara Leonie and myself, Jane Love, head of the Sixth."

Shelmerdine was not sure what she had expected Cara Leonie to look like, but certainly it was not like this. She was a small, quiet girl who appeared excessively nervous. She had a nervous mannerism of blinking repeatedly, which drew attention to her strange, green eyes, which had an almost oriental slant. When she smiled in greeting the newcomer, her upper lip drew back from her small white teeth in a manner which was difficult to describe, but extremely curious. She was polite, but gave the impression of a creature wholly enclosed within herself and yet at the same time nervously alert to every movement in the world outside her. The contrast with the solid Englishness of the two other girls could hardly have been more marked, and as the room began to fill up with hearty seniors fresh from a field trip, Cara Leonie sank more and more into the background, apparently occupied with her own thoughts.

Shelmerdine kept no more than a quarter of an eye on her. She could tell at once that Cara Leonie was abnormally sensitive and would know immediately if anybody was taking a more than usual interest in her. In fact it seemed likely that only someone with Shelmerdine's own stealth would be capable of observing her without giving herself away. "I wonder if I could pick her pocket," she mused, and determined to try.

It was not difficult to avoid paying undue attention to Cara Leonie, for Shelmerdine found that she herself was the subject of some considerable notice. It appeared that a mid-term arrival was really a very unusual thing at Granchester. The school had a waiting list stretching back to the last Ice Age, and it was virtually unheard of for some one just to turn up as Shelmerdine had done.

"Of course, I was put down for the school as an embryo," said Shelmerdine, "but I've been dogged by wretched health all my life. Literally bed-ridden. I suppose I'd given up all hope of ever having a healthy English girlhood, mixing with my own kind, playing the game with the flower of British maidenhood and all that sort of thing. Then, suddenly, the miraculous occurred. I was cured. My nameless malady vanished as mysteriously as it had appeared all those years ago. And, curiously enough, it was exactly on the tenth anniversary of the day I was first stricken; in the middle of a violent nocturnal storm very like the one that had been raging on that same night ten years ago—"

The story of Shelmerdine's illness had been devised by Miss Chess. It had been a simple enough device at the time, but somehow, as Shelmerdine related it to her school-fellows, it grew into a saga of epic proportions, if the reader will forgive my cross-cultural references.

"I suppose I should be more circumspect," sighed Shelmerdine inwardly, "But really, it is their fault. They are certainly the best audience I have ever had. One could swear they believe every word." She shot a side-long glance at Cara Leonie, who was pretending not to listen. "Except, of course, for her."

The test was positively horrific. If it had been devised by girls rather than by mistresses, Shelmerdine would have suspected it to be some sort of initiation ceremony designed to terrify new girls. It was intended to assess Shelmerdine's academic level, in order to place her within the school. "A quite

Straightforward test," the Headmistress had said reassuringly. She had omitted to mention that a Ph.D. would be required in order to read the questions. Surely she was not seriously expected to understand all this. She recalled that, historically speaking, the educational standards of 1989 were very low. She remembered tales of children of previous generations being fluent in Greek at prodigiously early ages and remembered that at the turn of her century many first-formers studied comparative philology, while in her own time many pupils left school with very little exact knowledge of the grammar of their own language. She recalled a story told by a friend of her mother's who had been doing O-levels when the system was first introduced. Her maths mistress had procured some old matriculation papers, that being the equivalent examination under the old system, for the class to practice upon. They had found them utterly impenetrable. Shelmerdine knew exactly how they had felt.

She attempted the few questions she could understand and then began to fidget. She turned her attention to the handsome gold fountain pen in her pocket. There was a tiny escutcheon engraved upon the clip: presumably the arms of the family Leonie, surmised Shelmerdine.

Merely by way of passing time, she unscrewed the barrel; but when she did so, she noticed a very curious thing. The reservoir did not take up the whole length of the barrel, but was only about half an inch long, while the cavity in the barrel was only of sufficient depth to accept it. It seemed an exceedingly odd and pointless arrangement. Shelmerdine weighed the barrel. It was not heavy enough to be solid gold, yet probably not light enough to be hollow. After some investigation Shelmerdine managed to slip a fingernail under the plate which closed the end of the barrel. There was a tiny click as an internal spring released the larger circular plate which sealed the barrel on the inside, revealing a secret chamber beyond the one which accepted the reservoir. A little teasing with the point of her pencil extracted a small quantity of tightly-packed cotton wool in which were embedded five quite large cut diamonds. After examining them for a few moments, Shelmerdine packed everything back neatly as she had found it and replaced the pen in her pocket.

"How was it?" asked several voices in the Common Room that evening.

"It was terrible," replied Shelmerdine. "It

revealed to me a dreadful fact which I had not hitherto suspected. A cruel and mocking irony. While my body is recovered completely and is as strong and healthy as if I had led an active life, my mind, during my years of prostration, has atrophied. The simplest questions threw me into chaos and confusion. No longer the invalid, I shall become the village idiot, alternately pitied or mocked according to the whim of the passer-by—"

"Rot," interrupted Jane Love sternly but not unkindly. "I doubt if the test went as badly as you think, but even if it did it will only be from want of practice. Hard work and application will soon have you up to standard."

Shelmerdine winced. Hard work and application, indeed. What kind of a school was it where even the girls used words like that? Her grimace did not go unnoticed.

A tall and rather solemn-looking girl named Veronica Carslisle rose to her feet. "Now look here, Shelmerdine. I'm not sure you're as broken up about this as you pretend. I suspect you of trying to play ragtime on us in some way and I suspect you of being an idler. Let me tell you that we don't put up with idlers here."

Shelmerdine raised an eyebrow and looked at Veronica with that mixture of pity and distaste reserved for drunks who accost one in the street. "What do you propose to do," she asked languidly, "roast me in front of the fire or belabour me with a cricket stump?"

"We don't have to be as unsubtle as that to deal with outsiders," said Veronica in a cold, matter-of-fact tone.

"That will be quite enough, Veronica," said Jane Love quietly. Shelmerdine was faintly amazed at her cool assumption of absolute authority. "The girl has just pulled through a long illness and she has only been here five minutes. Give her a chance to settle in."

There was a tense silence, broken by the hesitant voice of Cara Leonie. "I say, there isn't any need to look out for my fountain pen now. I—um—seem to have had it in my pocket all the time."

"Oh, Cara, honestly," said someone.

There was a knock at the door. A junior girl entered. "Can Shelmerdine Bingham please go to see Miss TaviStock," she piped, and waited to catch a glimpse of the unexpected new girl. Shelmerdine threw wide her arms in a melodramatic gesture and said "There, what did I tell you? You mock me but my grief is real."

"She seems intelligent enough to speak

to," said Miss Robbins. "

Probably some dreadfully old-fashioned governess," said Miss TaviStock, the Headmistress.

There was a knock at the door. "Enter," she called. Shelmerdine did.

There was a moment of silence. "I am not going to tell you the exact result of your test," began Miss TaviStock.

"Touch under par?" said Shelmerdine.

"Rather more than that. I fear. I would venture to suggest that your previous education has not been quite up to the modern standard."

"Child-centred," said Shelmerdine.

"Oh, come now. I am sure it was not *that* Elizabethan."

"Well, perhaps I exaggerate a little."

"But not by much," said Miss Robbins grimly. She found Shelmerdine less amusing than did the Headmistress.

"Quite so," said Miss TaviStock. She glanced at Miss Robbins, who left the room.

The Headmistress lowered her voice to a confidential and kindly tone. "I need hardly tell you, Shelmerdine, that it will take hard work and application to come up to the standard of a normal girl of your age. I doubt whether that will trouble you unduly. I know that you are a girl who has already shown great courage and determination in your life. However, there is something else which I must tell you. After careful consideration, Miss Robbins and I have decided that it would be pointless and unfair to keep you in the Sixth. The work would be far beyond you. For the present time, therefore, you are to be a member of the Third Form. Even there I think you will find the work very much more demanding than that to which you have become accustomed, but you are gifted with a splendid intelligence, and if you apply yourself I feel sure that you will gain a remove before very long. I have been dealing with girls for a long time, and despite your test result I am well able to tell that you have an excellent mind, and will find it far less difficult than many another girl placed in your rather awkward position.

"I also wish you to know that my door, figuratively speaking, is always open and that if you should have any difficulties in the weeks ahead, I shall be more than happy to talk them over with you. Now, is there anything you wish to say?"

"I—I don't know *what* to say," faltered Shelmerdine; and for once she really didn't.

Her first thought had been that while she

might well have the mental equipment to bring herself up to the rather ferocious academic standards of Granchester, she was certainly far too lazy to put in the effort required. Her second thought was one of incredulity in catching herself thinking the first. After all, she was not *really* a schoolgirl. This was a game,—a cover. There was no reason for her even to consider doing any serious work, and nothing to worry about whether she did or not. She must take care not to start getting swept into this game and taking it seriously. After all, she had never been tempted to take anything seriously in her own century, when she had some reason to. She had resisted all sorts of pressures without even really trying. Why did she suddenly catch herself taking this place seriously? "Perhaps because it takes itself seriously," she thought. She smiled and mentally dusted off her hands, having neatly disposed of that problem.

"What a crimp!" said Jane Love, uncharacteristically colloquial in her sympathy. "But never mind, Miss TaviStock knows what she is doing, and I'm sure you will be back among us in no time and thirty seconds."

"I'm sure I shall," said Shelmerdine, the real warmth beneath Jane's no-nonsense manner cutting short a more flippant reply.

"So, you're a junior nov," said Veronica Carlisle as she conducted Shelmerdine to the Third Form Common Room, an office for which she had promptly volunteered. "Let me warn you that if I get any more cheek of the kind you gave me earlier I shall sit on you hard."

"Aye aye, Sir," replied Shelmerdine and sauntered into her new Common Room with the air of one who, if she did not actually own the place, at least had a majority shareholding.

The room was filled with girls, mostly aged thirteen or fourteen, though there were a few younger ones who had gained an early remove and a few older ones who had not yet attained the necessary standard to pass into the Fourth. None was as old as Shelmerdine, however, and every eye turned upon her as she entered.

"I shall not trouble to introduce myself," she said. "I trust my fame has preceded me."

"To the utmost," confirmed a freckle-faced imp by the name of Alison Clarke.

"What a beastly crimp, though," put in another voice.

"Still, Miss TaviStock is bound to know what she is doing," pontificated a third.

"Why does everybody say the same things here," mused Shelmerdine. "Come to think of it, I suppose everybody said the same things back in the 'eighties. One notices them less when one is familiar with them." Shelmerdine perched herself comfortably but not inelegantly on the edge of a table and somebody at once stepped forward to confront her. The somebody in question was about fourteen and half a head shorter than herself. Her jet black hair was bobbed with the severest precision and she was at least as immaculate as any member of the Sixth. Her features had a sharp, almost elfin delicateness which was attractive without being exactly pretty and she was closely followed by another girl who does not need to be described, because she was identical to the first in every respect.

"Now, let's get down to business," said the first.

"Bless my boater," expostulated Shelmerdine. "The identical twins. I should have expected you. No school yarn complete without them, what?"

"Bang on the bean," confirmed the foremost twin.

"And this is going to be triple-X corker of a schoolgirl yarn if we have anything to say about it," expanded the hindmost.

"Allow me to introduce my sister, Caroline Fielding," said the foremost.

"Allow me to introduce my sister, Dorothy of that ilk," said the hindmost.

"But you can call them Dot and Carrie," put in Alison Clarke.

"I don't recall saying so," said Dot with some dignity.

"Take no notice of these whippersnappers," said Carrie to Shelmerdine. "They've no respect for their elders." At fourteen-and-a-half, Dot and Carrie were a little older than most of the girls in the form, but by no means all of them.

"Which brings us to the point," said Dot.

"In a roundabout sort of way," added Carrie.

"Well, let my boater be doubly beatified," said Shelmerdine. "You even complete each other's sentences."

"Bilge," said Dot tersely.

"And balderdash," emphasised Carrie.

"You don't want to believe all the rot you read about twins in Mrs. Edgeley's schoolgirl books," admonished Dot.

"Ripping as they are," added Carrie.

"Anyway, we stray from the point," said Dot.

"The point is that you are just a touch

over age for our Form."

"But Miss TaviStock wanted us to take you in, and we haven't the heart to refuse," explained Carrie.

"So now you're here," continued Dot, "the great question is this: are you going to be one of the chaps, or is it going to be like having a Sixth sitting in on our deliberations?"

"Or to put it another way," clarified Carrie, "are you game?"

"I suppose you realise," said Shelmerdine in a solemn and meditative tone, "that the way you are phrasing this proposition is calculated to sway my response in a particular direction."

"A Sixth, then," said Carrie.

"You have said so, not I," said Shelmerdine. "I am merely trying to form a balanced view of the proposition you are putting to me."

"To sum it up concisely," said Marian Greene, a girl who was old enough to be in the fourth, and no great admirer of Dot and Carrie, "are you going to behave like some semblance of an intelligent human being or are you going to join these young half-wits in playing the goat?"

Shelmerdine smiled. "A much more lucid summation of the problem," she said. "Put that way, my course is clear. The goat it is."

If every voice in the room did not join in the cheer which shook it, one can only surmise that several of the girls were doing the work of two. "Within reason, of course," said Shelmerdine, less from any sense of responsibility than because she always liked to keep people a little uncertain about her exact position.

"Oh perfectly," said Dot, "we wouldn't go in for anything yahoo. Just the odd spot of jinks to prevent life from becoming too unamusing."

Shelmerdine found herself unexpectedly comfortable among the Third. The twins warmed to her at once. Most of the others were just a touch in awe of her superior age, which she did not mind at all, but the twins immediately accepted her as more-or-less an equal, which, from them, was a signal compliment.

The twins were, unofficially, the joint leaders of the Third. Their close friend and confidante was Alison Clarke, and it became clear almost from the beginning that Shelmerdine was welcome as a fourth member of the Inner Circle. Whether she would fully take up the position she was not certain. She had always regarded herself as "the Cat that Walked by Itself". At the same time, the idea of the

twins' "jinks" appealed to her. After all, one might as well have some amusement while one was here.

The twins and Alison virtually monopolised the new arrival during the first few days, much to the annoyance of many curious members of the Third. It was obvious to all that Shelmerdine was quite a property. Not only was she old enough to be a Sixth and game, but she was amusing, always seemed to say and do the unexpected and—and, well, there was a certain indefinable something about her upon which nobody could put a finger but which everybody sensed. Shelmerdine Bingham was different.

For Shelmerdine, her reception by the Third in general and the Inner Circle in particular was a novel sensation. She was used to being regarded as different, or even odd. She always had been. In the past some people had held her in awe, others had avoided her and some had wanted to get to know her, though Shelmerdine had never allowed them to because they had never been the sort of people she wished to know.

Here, however, the whole atmosphere was different. She found herself the object of an attention of a kind she had never before encountered. It was if people were less guarded, less insecure, and therefore could show a curiosity about her which was quite open and genial. There seemed, strangely enough, to be a less rigid attitude to Shelmerdine's lack of conformity—and indeed to lack of conformity in general. In Shelmerdine's own time, a time which had prided itself on its nonconformity, there had always been a dark suspicion of any one who did not conform in the precise ways specified by the times. Here, where conformity was the norm, eccentricity seemed to be far more easily tolerated.

The twins and Shelmerdine formed a well-matched group. The twins looked rather older than their age and Shelmerdine a little younger than hers, and all three were immaculately well-groomed. People as a whole were neater in this era, an observation which does not necessarily extend to the members of Form III, but the twins, as of nature, carried themselves with a demure dignity which belied their impish interiors, and were fastidious to a fault about their personal appearance. To Shelmerdine, neatness did not come naturally, but from the moment she had put on the Granchester uniform she had made the most strenuous efforts to be neat and to comport herself immaculately. It was probably the first thing over which she had made

any real effort in her life, and if one had asked her why, and had been lucky enough to catch her in a rare moment of candour, she could not have answered.

At breakfast the next morning, Shelmerdine sat with the Inner Circle. The twins felt duty bound to fulfil the promise of the previous day and initiate forthwith some rag which would not disappoint the newcomer.

"Dares," said Carrie. This mysterious utterance was at once recognised by her sister as being the continuation of a hastily-whispered conversation which had taken place at the wash-bowl.

"Dares——" mused Dot.

Shelmerdine, not wishing the twins to assume that they had any automatic right to the initiative, at once stepped in.

"Excellent idea," she said. The twins were stunned by her alacrity. "I shall begin, Carrie, I dare you——"

"You can't dare Carrie on her own," interrupted Dot. "We do everything together."

"Very well then, Sisters Fielding, I dare you to drink a toast out of the Hope Carrington Cup."

There was a moment of silence. The twins had mentioned the Cup last night. It was awarded each year to the winner of the inter-house fencing tournament, and was one of the school's most coveted treasures, having been presented some years ago by an old girl, Lady Deirdre Hope-Carrington.

"Not possible," objected Carrie. "The cup is locked in a glass cabinet in the Head's Study."

"Then you decline the dare?" asked Shelmerdine.

"It isn't a matter of declining it," said Dot. "It can't be done."

"Ah me," lamented Shelmerdine, "youngsters today. No initiative. Now, when I was your age——"

"Why don't you do it yourself then, since you are so jolly clever," challenged Dot.

"Why, of course I shall," said Shelmerdine. "I always perform my own dares if somebody refuses them. I think we should make that a rule."

After lunch the Inner Circle gathered in one of their favourite meeting places—seated on a low section of wall almost completely screened by an overhanging tree.

"Have you brought the ginger beer?" asked Shelmerdine.

"Here it is," said Carrie.

"Good, then I shall fetch the cup. I shouldn't be five minutes."

"I say," said Dot, "I'm not sure we ought to let you do this. I mean, you haven't been here long."

"And you've never been at school before," added Carrie.

"We shouldn't want to start leading you into frightful trouble."

"I haven't noticed anybody leading me," said Shelmerdine. "Now stop bothering or I shan't be able to get it back before the Head returns from lunch."

Shelmerdine was rather less than her stated five minutes. She already had the key to the Head's Study in her pocket, having brushed past Miss Tavistock on her way to lunch. It was on a small silver ring with a number of other keys, one of which fitted the trophy cabinet. It would be a simple matter to rinse the cup in a lavatory after the toast, dry it on a hand towel and return it. She would leave the keys in the door of the room, confident that the absent-minded Headmistress would believe she had left them there herself.

"To high jinks and low cunning," Shelmerdine was about to say as she raised the Cup, brimming with frothy ginger beer; but she did not say it. She looked at the eyes of her three companions, bright with excitement and admiration, and knew that such a toast would go terribly against the grain.

"To Granchester," she said.

"To Granchester," echoed the three and, after passing the Cup round, raised, quite without embarrassment, three hearty cheers.

As Shelmerdine sauntered back to the group, having replaced the Cup, she felt a curious sense of wellbeing. The sun was shining down the mile-long natural valley which formed the School's garden. It was cut into long terraces upon which were flower beds and little lawns, while the silvery river wound away into the distance. The old stone of the School itself had a solidity which she had never found in the equally venerable building in which her former education had taken place. It was not sullied with modern conveniences, and, somehow, the people within it seemed a part of it in a way that had not been so in her day. The present era and that in which the School had been built were two very different ages, yet there was no violent rupture between them that would make either one seem alien in the eyes of the other.

This sense of harmony with history merged in her mind with the harmony of the gardens and of the sunlight and with that soaring sensation in her breast which excite-

ment and danger invariably brought. Interestingly, her heart had beaten faster during this escapade, where the risks, so far as Shelmerdine was concerned, were of no account whatever, than it had in many transgressions of the law; and she was now filled with a sense of satisfaction greater than she had felt for some considerable time.

—To be continued—

Correspondence

The Woman Question

MADAM,

Mitylene's essay in your first number seems to us somewhat misguided. She draws attention to the women in history who have occupied positions of power, have conducted business enterprises and even led armies into battle. Such women have certainly existed, but we would say that the forward progress of history has been toward making woman increasingly feminine in all the senses in which we understand that word.

In no animal species are the male and the female so highly differentiated as in the human and while among primitive tribes the women might live as rough and hardy a life as the men (though always physically weaker and socially subordinate), as society becomes more civilised, women become more and more the ornaments of the human world.

In the high Victorian era, with the crinoline, woman reached perhaps her high point of elegance and delicate femininity; at the same time civilisation attained a moral delicacy and rectitude and a degree of cultivation which it had never had before.

The de-civilising influences which have been operating in the present century (epitomised in the two "World Wars" which at once lowered the level of civilisation and brought women into masculine jobs) are retrograde: they are revolts against the course of civilisation.

We fully accept that Mitylene is not a strident feminist of the "ragged-trousered misanthropist" type, but at a time when the "mass-media" are straining every nerve to show women in rough masculine activities and occupations; when government legislation is directed at undermining the feminine rôle in the home and in society; and when the educational system is bent upon inflicting untold psychological damage upon the children in its care by attempting to destroy their consciousness of the natural sex-roles, we feel that Mitylene's insistence upon the

"exceptions that prove the rule" is, to say the least, ill-timed.

YOURS & C. MR. and MRS. C. BENNETT

MADAM,

"Reflections of a Romantic Feminist" was a truly masterly (mistressly?) piece of work. For those like me (and I am sure there are many) who have long been torn between the necessity of a certain independence and a belief in true femininity—or, to put it negatively, between a dislike of female subordination and an even stronger dislike of modern feminism, both in its "fringe" political forms and its official equal-opportunity-and-State-child-farm manifestation—Mitylene provided, not a solution (how could she?), but certainly a sane, humane, witty and traditionalist way of approaching the subject. Really, it allowed me to breathe again in the presence of a subject which has for long been stifled by dogmas of all sorts.

In your editorial you promised that *The English Magazine* would open up subjects to fresh discussion, free from weary modernist orthodoxies. This was a splendid start. It was—dare I say it to a paper such as yours?—liberating.

MISS T. P. CHILDS.

Yes, but only this once.

Deliberate Illegibility

MADAM,

I was delighted by the helpful suggestions for avoiding allowing one's Christian name to be used by presumptuous strangers. There is nothing more awful than being addressed as "Jane", or whatever one's name may be, by people whom one has only just met and does not wish to meet again (their very presumption ensures that one does not wish to meet them again, whatever their other qualities may be).

The suggestions concerning introductions and cards have been current for some time, of course, but what does your Etiquette Correspondent suggest regarding signatures on letters. One can, of course sign "J. Smith" with "Miss J. Smith" typed or printed beneath it, but I do not like this style of signature for a woman, even though Jane Austen signed herself "J. Austen" even in intimate correspondence with her family. My own solution is to adopt an illegible signature for people outside Society with title, initial and

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surname printed underneath, thus I am not prevented from using the form of signature I prefer by the odd manners of the modern world.

YOURS &c.

MISS C. JEFFRIES

Our *Etiquette Correspondent* writes—"the first of the two solutions is the one I would have suggested, but Miss Jeffries's practice is an admirable alternative for those who prefer not to sign with the initial."

Reviews Section

WE TAKE pleasure in inaugurating the Reviews Section of *The English Magazine*. Our reviews policy—as with most of the things we do—is a slightly unusual one. We do not propose to concentrate solely upon new books, partly because there is virtually no modern fiction which we can recommend to our readers (I include the word "virtually" in a spirit of overcautiousness, though if any of our readers can direct our attention to a work which might justify it, we will be more than grateful), and partly because we see our duty as that of recommending to the attention of our readers any work of merit regardless of the date of its publication. Bearing in mind that many of our readers and contributors prefer to "live in the past" we are quite likely to review a Victorian work as if—or partly as if—it had just come out. So, we will review works old and new, unknown and famous, all in the timeless spirit of tradition. Where a new work is in print, or was recently in print, we will give a price. We do not do this with old works, whether in print or not, since we do not wish to encourage the purchase of horrid modern editions of older books where it may be avoidable. The second-hand or antiquarian bookseller should always be the Romantic's first port of call in these cases. Hoping, then, that it may bring you both pleasure and profit now and in time to come, we hereby declare the Review Section officially open.

Manners Mafnyth Man

PERHAPS the most interesting thing about *The Good Manners Guide* (The Polite Society, £11-19s) is that it should have appeared at all. Good manners are hardly a matter in which the modern world would appear to take much interest, to put it no more strongly than that.

When I tell you that this is not an etiquette book, but a book covering every aspect of ordinary, everyday good conduct

and decent behaviour, no doubt your surprise will begin to equal mine.

The book is really a sort of manifesto for a very laudable organisation called the Polite Society. Do not let that put you off. It is a well-produced book, nearly 200 pages long and containing a wide-ranging collection of material, much of it from professional writers and journalists. The scope of the book extends from an historical survey of manners and analyses of various aspects of the present situation to codes of manners recommended by the Society, lists of businesses designated as "courtesy enterprises" by the Society for their courteous treatment of the public (a very useful reference), of schools which have corporate membership of the society (encouragingly, there are several of these) and various other things.

Inevitably, with a Society of this kind, the question arises as to how broad its brief should be. The question of manners merges imperceptibly with that of morals and of the whole direction of society. To ignore the larger questions leaves the presentation rather narrow and lop-sided, while to pronounce upon them immediately opens a hundred areas of contention which can only be divisive of a Society whose aim must be to unite as large a number of men as possible in the pursuit of a single, clear-cut and preferably uncontentious aim.

In these circumstances, it is necessary to steer something of a middle course; and to fudge the larger issues with vague generalities is not only not wrong, but is positively the proper course of action. Thus, whether manners can be reformed in isolation or whether they must be accompanied by a moral reform, and if the latter, whether that moral reform could take place in the absence of a broad social and political reform, and what form these reforms would take are questions which receive only glancing and implicit treatment. From much of what is said, I think we would conclude that manners and morals are linked and are closely interwoven with social and political issues. More than that is for each member to decide for himself, as is only proper and practical.

Not being constrained by the responsibilities of maintaining a Society, this reviewer feels it appropriate to offer a few observations on the subject, largely because she considers that a review of a book of this kind must also be a review of the Society which has produced it and of its potential value.

Firstly, it is really undeniable that man-

ners and morals are closely linked. There may be manners without morals; there may even (up to a point) be morals without manners, but the two things are part of a continuum, as is shown in many places in this book: for example, in Miss Mary Kenny's essay deploring the way that the charm and ritual of courtship have been destroyed by modern "permissiveness", leaving, in many cases, only a barbarous and selfish usage of women by men.

Secondly, it must be recognised that courtesy is not merely kindness and consideration. It is a social phenomenon, rooted in the order of society. It has not broken down "by accident" at this particular time. Its destruction has been the necessary concomitant of the destruction of the last vestiges of traditional, hierarchical social order. One does not have to espouse (and the present writer does not espouse) the "iron fist" thesis of Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne and M. Claude Lenoir, expressed elsewhere in this issue, in order to understand that ordered, courteous behaviour is rooted in religion, in respect for tradition, and in the civilising order of a normal, unequal, hierarchical society. Egalitarianism is destructive of courtesy. It was so in revolutionary France and in revolutionary Russia. Republican America was, until recently, renowned for the comparative rudeness of its citizens. Englishmen would come back saying "they behave so badly in public places". If we no longer say that, it is because the undermining of our own class structure has at last brought us to the same condition.

So, if rudeness is necessarily endemic in the "classless society", and if it can be eradicated only by a large social reform, are the efforts of such a group as the Polite Society ultimately futile? On two grounds, we would answer: "No". Firstly because any amelioration is of value. A return to decent behaviour on the part even of a small minority is in itself worthwhile. Is that not a cardinal principle of our own Romanticism?

Secondly, and more broadly, we would return to our opening remark. The very appearance of this book is interesting in itself. The support, small, but by no means insignificant, attracted by the Society may be symptomatic of something rather larger. As civilised values have crumbled over the last hundred years, that movement has been accompanied by the tireless efforts of innumerable small groups, each chipping remorselessly away at some small area of human decency or traditional order. These groups have adopted causes, usually masked by seemingly innocu-

ous euphemisms—"family planning"; "the right to happiness" (i.e. divorce); "the right to choose" (i.e. child murder); anti-corporal punishment lobbies, anti-private education lobbies; lobbies for the destruction of private wealth and inheritance, lobbies for removing all restrictions from the presentation of obscenity in public performances, lobbies for getting women into factories and their children into State crèches, lobbies for abandoning national defence, lobbies for overturning or undermining every conceivable aspect of sane, civilised society. Most of them have succeeded in their aims. A few, like the Esperanto Society, have not.

If there is to be a return, as Mr. Worsthorne, Miss Langridge and many others think, to some form of civilised order; if, as seems probable, the high-water mark of egalitarianism has already been passed; might we not expect to see "signs of the times" in the formation of Societies and lobbies tending in the other direction? And if so, might not the Polite Society be a very healthy sign indeed?

One final remark. If you are interested in this book but do not quite feel like buying it, why not request a copy at your public library. This will be of great help to the Society and will enable others to read this very worthwhile book.

L.T.

The Good Manners Guide is available post free from: The Polite Society, 18 The Avenue, Basford, Newcastle upon Tyne, Staffordshire at £11-19s (paper-back £4-19s).

High Tory Times

MERCURIUS PRAGMATICUS describes itself as "A Christian Tory Quarterly". The word *Tory* is used in the old sense, and the paper has strong Jacobite leanings; its front covers usually being adorned with splendid reproductions of portraits of legitimist royalty.

Though small, the paper is produced to a very high standard and has a number of eminent contributors, including, until a little while ago, the late and deeply lamented Sir John Biggs-Davidson.

If the real-life equivalent of Sir Robert Denvenish is a young man today (Imperial Home Service listeners-in will know what I mean) he probably takes in *Mercurius Pragmaticus*—unless, of course, he is too much of a Hanoverian loyalist.

G.F.

Mercurius Pragmaticus is 15/- per issue from 40 Albany Court, Epping, Essex. Annual Subscription £3-0-0 (£4-0-0 overseas).

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The Latest Music

I DO not deviate one inch from the doctrine I expounded last issue. By the measures of vitality, reality and sheer technical excellence, the bendy record is never likely to catch up with the real thing. However, there are some jolly jinky things on bendies these days, and if you happen to have the equipment to play them with (like a gramophone only rather slow, y'know), I have no objection to putting you wise to a few of the best. As a matter of fact there is something of a boom in the publication of new jinky records these days, and since they are all monophonic, you do not need to have one of those ghastly robotic devices with which shameless people deface their drawing rooms. I am not quite sure what you will use, but then that is up to you, what? I borrowed an old Dan-sette from one of the natives and allowing for what it wasn't it was pretty spiff-ho.

Well, enough preamble and on to the feast which the record companies have so kindly sent to this office. Let me start with the gem of the collecsh. because—well, because why not?

The gem of the collecsh. is entitled *Easy to Remember* and subtitled (this is the good bit) Bing Crosby, 1931-1936. (Saville—ask for SVL 190) This is a world-class spiff, which includes not only the eponymous "Easy to Remember" but also opens the proceedings with that heart-stopper "Out of Nowhere". If you do not know those two songs, it is high time you did. You can be forgiven for not knowing many of the others. A lot of the songs on this bendy are very rare. They all belong to Bing's earlyish period as a crooner, and tend to be on the slow, haunting side: less relaxed and easy-going than his later songs. A few, like "I've Got to Pass Your House to Get to My House" are rare because they were never reissued, and Pipplt can understand why. You will probably disagree though. All in all, a corking collection.

Next Nelson Eddy: *Love's Old Sweet Song* (Happy Days—CHD 150). This is one for all you Arcadians. Do Arcadians have bendy machines? Well, if you do you can put it to good use here. Like the title song, most of these are drawing-room ballads, which it seems are Mr. Eddy's favourite sort of song and very good at them he is, too. One minor complaint is that the chap who wrote the writing on the sleeve, at one point insolently refers to Jeanette MacDonald as "MacDonald"—and she is not even on the record. But you will be

glad I put you onto it.

In *Dick Powell: On the Avenue* (Happy Days—CHD 147) we have once again the boy-half of a famous partnership jinking alone. Well, Nelson Eddy does not actually *jink* much, but Dick Powell does. Splendid songs from hit shows like *The Gold Diggers of 1937* and *On the Avenue* itself, all delivered in that wonderful, unique style of his.

Now here is an unusual one—well I have not heard of it before anyway—*Fimmie Lunceford & His Orchestra: "Oh Boy!"* (Happy Days—CHD 132). Oh boy indeed! The repertoire of this band is described as "Commercial and novelty tunes laced with jazz, red-hot killer-dillers, glee-club specialities and hep vocal trios". This is a big swing band with a brilliantly polished style and just the thing for you young pipsie-pops.

What can I say about *Dust Off that Old Pianna* (Saville—SVL 189) except that it is a series of recordings made by "Fats" Waller between 5 January 1935 and 8 May 1935. I mean, you all know about "Fats" Waller. It is no good my giving you lists of all the instrumentalists like a profesh. because this is not that sort of maggie and I am not that sort of sort. What I will say is that we have here some splendid "Fats", including some that is very rare and some standards, including that standard of standard "Fats" songs, "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter."

Finally, we have *Jean Sablon: Pour Toi* (Happy Days—CHD 134). Very French, very suave, very good. M. Sablon has a timeless quality which some of the chaps do not like. Precisely because it is timeless, his music does not sound so reactionary as the others mentioned here. All the recordings are in fact from the early to mid '30s, but some of them could have been done much later. Nonetheless, a singer of great charm. As always, the choice is yours.

PIPPIT

Adieu

AND so must Miss Prism and her friends for the present take their leave of you. No Victorian review was possible this time for reasons of space, but we have some waiting for you. Indeed, we have so many things which are just waiting for us to be able to fit them in. Miss Prism, as she has said, is pleased with the correspondence she has received, but she begs you to continue to write. Remember that a good magazine is like a good conversation. Each may contribute something of his own peculiar charm. Adieu.